

PROVIDENCE, R.I.

JOURNAL

MAY 14 1971

M - 66,673

S - 209,501

A Single Agency

A major reorganization of the nation's overseas intelligence services is under consideration at the White House, and the sooner the job is done, the better for the country. The precise outlines of the overhaul are not yet clear, but it is obvious that Mr. Nixon is determined to improve intelligence services while cutting high operational costs.

The Central Intelligence Agency is the most prominent of the federal agencies which collect and analyze foreign intelligence. But there are five other agencies involved in similar work. The total annual bill for all six agencies runs to about five billion dollars; about 200,000 persons are involved, mostly in the armed services.

A study made for the President includes a recommendation for the creation of a Cabinet-level intelligence department; it also includes provisions for tightening CIA's oversight of intelligence work done for the ~~armed services~~ in the Defense Department. It is plain that any reorganization will run squarely into operation of long-established vested interests.

There is a superficial attraction to the idea of creating a Secretary of Intelligence, but does the task of correlating overseas intelligence work rate a Cabinet post? It would seem that such a service is intended to provide information to all major agencies of government and, as such, might more properly be made a White House staff function.

Assigning the CIA primacy among the intelligence agencies is certain to run into opposition, particularly from military service agencies. But somehow, the goal of cooperation must be fixed and enforced in place of what must often be almost cutthroat competition among the six agencies for money, staff, and authority.

Congressional opposition or suspicion of a presidential effort to centralize the overseas intelligence services might be blunted if Mr. Nixon accompanied his executive order with a proposal for appointment of a joint congressional committee, such as the Atomic Energy Committee, to oversee the intelligence gathering services for the legislative branch.

Mr. Nixon will not have an easy time in the proposed reorganization, no matter what may be the precise nature of administrative reforms. But reforms are needed; in fact, they have long been overdue. A single agency, coordinating all intelligence work overseas effectively for the President and his Cabinet, is essential to the national security.

SALEM, ORE.
STATESMAN

M. - 34,979 MAY 14 1971
S - 35,572

The high cost of intelligence

The U.S. government spends an estimated \$5 billion annually gathering intelligence all over the world.

President Nixon has serious doubts about whether we are getting our money's worth, reports The New York Times. He is considering various ideas to reorganize our various global information collection efforts.

The Central Intelligence Agency, a civilian organization, is our prime means of gathering strategic information throughout the world. But much of the intelligence effort is carried out through the Defense Intelligence Agency and 150,000 men assigned to intelligence branches of the various armed services.

The \$5 billion cost figure is only a very rough estimate. The government never reveals intelligence spending publicly, in order to deny this information to potential enemies. As a result, only a handful of our congressmen and hardly any ordinary citizens know much about our intelligence activities.

The President reportedly is concerned about the quality of our intelligence effort as well as its cost. The Times says he wasn't happy about two recent intelligence failures, which probably is an understatement. One was the

work that preceded that abortive prisoner camp raid deep into North Vietnam last November, when the raiders discovered the prisoners hadn't been in the camp for some time. The other was the great underestimate of North Vietnam's ability to counter that South Vietnamese move into Laos.

Good foreign intelligence is of extreme importance to the U.S. It can mean the difference between preventing and blundering into a war. It can prevent serious mistakes our government otherwise might make on a long list of subjects — everything up to and including the question of what new weapons systems we should be developing to protect our country from which potential threats. It's a prerequisite to meaningful arms control, for example, which if achieved might save us several times the cost of all intelligence work.

So if it takes \$5 billion per year to keep our government well informed about scads of actions taking place all over the globe, we'll not complain.

But both the size of the price tag and some of the recent fumbles make us suspect that the President's critical review is very much in order.